

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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R 071630Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1203

INFO AMCONSUL RECIFE

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

AMCONSUL BELEM

AMCONSUL PORTO ALEGRE

AMCONSUL SALVADOR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJECT: MEDICI'S YEAR-END ADDRESS: THE OTHER SIDE

REF: BRASILIA 0025

SUMMARY. PRESIDENT MEDICI'S YEAR-END ADDRESS SUMMED UP THE PROGRESS OF BRAZIL DURING HIS ADMINISTRATION. WHILE HIS CLAIMS FOR ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT WENT UNCHALLENGED, THE PRESIDENT'S ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE INCREASING POPULAR ACCEPTANCE OF THE REGIME BY CITING THE ELECTORAL SUCCESSES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ARENA PARTY DREW FIRE FROM THE OPPOSITION AND FROM MAJOR NEWSPAPERS.

1. PRESIDENT MEDICI CLAIMED THAT THE ARENA PARTY'S SUCCESS IN INCREASING ITS MAJORITY IN THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATURES IN THE 1970 ELECTIONS DEMONSTRATED GROWING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR "THE EXISTING POLITICAL SYSTEM." THIS BROUGHT A SHARP RESPONSE FROM OPPOSITION MDB PARTY SEC-GEN

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THALES RAMALHO, WHO, CITING PERCENTAGES OF VOTES CAST IN THE

ELECTIONS OF 1966 AND 1970, SHOWED THAT BOTH THE ARENA AND MDB PARTIES HAD CAPTURED A PROGRESSIVELY SMALLER PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE. ACCORDING TO THALES, "THE REAL INCREASE FROM ONE ELECTION TO THE OTHER WAS REGISTERED BY THE PARTY OF THE DEFACED BALLOT, THE PARTY OF ABSTENTION. IF THE ARENA PARTY IS INCREASING CONSTANTLY IN ITS APPEAL TO THE ELECTORATE, " HE CONTINUED, "WHY DID THE MEDICI ADMINISTRATION AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO MAINTAIN THE SYSTEM OF INDIRECT ELECTIONS FOR STATE GOVERNORS?" THALES RECALLED THAT PRESIDENT MEDICI, ON TAKING OFFICE, HAD PROMISED TO RETURN THE COUNTRY TO THE FULL PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY. "NOT BEING ABLE TO FULFILL THIS PROMISE, HE APPEARS TO HAVE TRADED IT FOR A MORE MODEST ONE, THAT OF TRANSFER OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER WITHOUT CRISIS, AND CALLS HIMSELF SATISFIED." REFERRING TO THE PRESIDENT'S CLAIM OF "FULL HARMONY" BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS CHOSEN PARTY LEADERSHIP, THALES CLAIMED THAT THE PAST FOUR YEARS HAVE SEEN "ON ONE HAND, A THUNDERING INDIFFERENCE TO POLITICAL MATTERS ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO HOLD THE REINS OF POWER, AND, ON THE OTHER, COMPLETE SUBMISSION ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTY LEADERS. THIS CAN BE CALLED OTHER THINGS THAN HARMONY."

2. RESPECTED COLUMNIST CARLOS CASTELLO BRANCO, FEATURED IN JORNAL DO BRASIL, WRITES THAT THE ADMITTED POPULARITY OF PRESIDENT MEDICI CANNOT BE APPLIED TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES, "WHICH REPRESENT NOTHING AND WHICH SURVIVE AT THE MARGINS OF NATIONAL LIFE AS THE EXPRESSION OF AN INTENTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVT TO REINSTITUTE CIVIL INSTITUTIONS AT SOME FUTURE DATE. CASTELLO BRANCO STATED THAT IT WAS A PITY THAT THE PRESIDENT INCLUDED THE ELECTORAL VICTORIES OF THE ARENA PARTY AMONG THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION, SINCE IT WAS EASY TO VERIFY THAT THEY MEAN EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE. THE COLUMNIST CONCLUDED: "THE MOST SERIOUS ELEMENT IN THE FIGURES CITED BY THE PRESIDENT IN RELATION TO THE ELECTIONS IS THAT THEY ARE TRUE. THIS IS THE TRAGEDY OF THE SYSTEM AND THE DRAMA OF HIS GOVT".

3. IN A JANUARY 3 EDITORIAL, O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO OFFERED A CORRECTION TO MEDICI'S "ROSY POLITICAL VISION...WHICH IS NOT SHARED BY THE TOTALITY OF THE NATION. HIS MESSAGE SUGGESTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A NEAR-PERFECT IDENTITY BETWEEN THE EXISTING SYSTEM AND THAT DESIRED, IMPLYING, IN OTHER WORDS, THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS OF 1964 HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY TRANSLATED INTO AN AUTHENTICALLY DEMOCRATIC REGIME. NOW THE SIMPLE AND ALMOST AUTOMATIC FUNCTIONING OF JUDICIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS IMPOSED BY A SMALL MAJORITY DOES NOT AMOUNT TO THE INSTALLATION OF A DEMOCRATIC REGIME...THERE IS NO TRUE DEMOCRACY WITHOUT FULL PRACTICE OF THE RULE OF LAW, WITHOUT A JUDICIARY

THAT FUNCTIONS WITH ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCE, WITHOUT ACCEPTANCE
OF THE INSTITUTION OF HABEAS CORPUS AS AN INALIENABLE RIGHT OF
CIVILIZED SOCIETIES, WITHOUT POLITICAL PARTIES THAT REPRESENT
THE CURRENTS OF PUBLIC OPINION, WITHOUT RESPECT FOR FREEDOM
OF THE PRESS ON THE PART OF THE GOVT, NOR WITHOUT A
PROFOUND AND PERMANENT DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNORS AND
THE GOVERNED." CITING THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUED USE OF
EMERGENCY POWERS, THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES, "NOTHING HAS
CHANGED ON THE POLITICAL HORIZON,
EXCEPT A SLIGHT AND PERHAPS
MALIGN EVOLUTION OF THE LANGUAGE. (THOSE POWERS) WHICH WERE
TO BE TEMPORARY HAVE BECOME PERMANENT AND HAVE BEEN
LABELLED DEMOCRATIC. THE WORD 'REVOLUTION'...HAS BEEN
INCORPORATED INTO THE POLITICAL LEXICON OF THE SYSTEM, BUT THE
POLITICS IN PRACTICE DENY OR FORGET REVOLUTIONARY AND
DEMOCRATIC IDEALS...AND BECAUSE BLIND OBEDIENCE
HAS BECOME THE GREATEST OF THE 'REVOLUTIONARY' VIRTUES, WE
FREQUENTLY SEE SUPPORTERS OF THE REGIM AND METHODS OF JOAO
GOULART TRANSFORMED INTO LOYAL MEMBERS OF THE ARENA PARTY
AND SUPPORTERS OF THE NEW 'ORGANIC DEMOCRACY' WHICH EXISTS
THEREIN...AT THIS POINT IN THE LIFE OF THE NATION, WE CANNOT
SHARE THE PRESIDENT'S MOOD OF POLITICAL TRIUMPH. AS DEMOCRATS
AND REVOLUTIONARIES, WE MUST FULFILL OUR DUTY TO MAKE IT CLEAR
THAT OUR IDEA OF DEMOCRACY DOES NOT COINCIDE WITH HIS."
CRIMMINS

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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4. POLITICAL ANALYST CARLOS CHAGAS, WRITING IN O ESTADO DO SAO PAULO, AGREES THAT THE PRESIDENT FULFILLED HIS VOW TO BRING ABOUT A SUCCESSION WITHOUT CRISIS, BUT ASKS, "WHAT ABOUT HIS OTHER PROMISE, THE GRATER PROMISE TO DELIVER TO HIS SUCCESSOR A COUNTRY IN FULL EXERCISE OF DEMOCRACY? AND WHAT ABOUT THE PROMISE OF DIALOGUE WITH THE POLITICIANS, THE WORKERS, THE EMPLOYERS, THE INTELLECTUALS, THE JOURNALISTS, THE CHURCH? WE ARE STILL AWAITING WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT ON THESE MATTERS." ADDRESSING THE PRESIDENT'S CLAIM THAT GENERAL GEISEL'S ACCEPTANCE TO THE POLITICIANS WAS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS UNANIMOUS ELECTION AT THE ARENA PARTY CONVENTION, CHAGAS ASKS, "DIDN'T HE EVER CONSIDER THAT THIS UNANIMITY COULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN THE HOPE THAT THE POLITICIANS WOULD FINALLY SEE THE RESTORATION OF THEIR REAL PREROGATIVES OF PARTICIPATION? COULD NOT THIS UNANIMITY FOR THE FUTURE HAVE ITS ORIGINS IN A DESIRE TO CHANGE THE PRESENT, IN THE IMPERATIVE NECESSITY TO INFLUENCE THE FOURTH PRESIDENT OF THE SYSTEM TO FULFILL THE PROMISES, XXISVP FUNFSSORS...AND REESTABLISH, EVEN IF
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GRADUALLY, FULL DEMOCRACY?"

5. COMMENT. MEDICI'S PRAISE OF THE LEADERSHIP AND DYNAMISM OF THE POLITICAL CLASS, SOMETHING HE HAS STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED IN PAST SPEECHES, CAN BE INTERPRETED IN PART AS AN ATTEMPT TO "REHABILITATE" THE POLITICAL CLASS IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ENLARGED ROLE MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE POLITICIANS WILL BE ALLOWED TO PLAY UNDER THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION.

6. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT'S IMPLICIT EQUATING OF "POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND DYNAMISM" WITH SUPPORT FOR THE REGIME, AND THE EXAGGERATION AND OVERSIMPLIFICATION, NOT TO SAY DISTORTION, REPRESENTED BY HIS ACCOMPANYING ASSERTIONS THAT THE "POPULAR CONSENSUS" HAS ESTABLISHED A FIRM BASE FOR THE REGIME'S LEGITIMACY AND THAT THAT POPULAR SUPPORT WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE ELECTORAL VICTORIES OF ARENA, PROVOKED A QUICK AND SHARPLY CRITICAL REACTION. THIS CAME PARTICULARLY FROM THOSE SECTORS OF THE POLITICAL CLASS AND THE PRESS WHO ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF THE GAP BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT'S 1969 INAUGURAL PROMISE TO LEAVE FOR HIS SUCCESSOR "DEMOCRACY FIRMLY INSTALLED IN OUR COUNTRY" AND THE REALITY OF THE BRAZILIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM.

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